

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 and 31 were originally filed in this application. Claims 3, 5 and 26-29 have been withdrawn, and claim 4 has been cancelled. Claims 1, 2, 6-25, and 30 have been rejected. Applicants have amended claims 1, 2, and 30 in this reply.

Support for the amendments may be found in the originally filed specification, claims, and figures. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Drawing Figures Objection(s)

Based on a phone conference between Examiner Shannon Saliard and Attorney Shahpar Shahpar on January 26, 2009, Examiner Saliard has agreed to hold the objection to the drawings in abeyance (and allow any required changes to be made upon payment of the issue fee). This understanding was confirmed via voicemail with Examiner Saliard on September 28, 2009.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1, 2, 6-9, 13-20, and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as allegedly being indefinite.

Based on the examiner interview on March 31, 2009, Applicant has clarified the claim language in claims 1, 2, and 30 to address this rejection.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 6-8, 21, 22, and 24

Claims 1, 6-8, 21, 22, and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Hafen (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0023453).

Hafen fails to teach, advise, or suggest at least the following claim elements as recited in claim 1:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage

facility;

a server ~~using an inventory information capture~~ having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein ~~the user inputs the inventory information into the room inventory database via the computer-terminal and an inventory information capture and the user room inventory database includes~~ accesses the inventory information pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

~~the server using a customer information capture in communication with the inventory information capture~~, accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, ~~and having wherein the user inputs the customer information into the server via the computer-terminal and a customer information capture and the user accesses the customer information~~ pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network; and

the server having using a reporting feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server,

via the reporting feature, wherein the user reporting feature extracts and analyzes the inventory information from the room inventory database pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network,

via the reporting feature, wherein the user and extracts and analyzes the customer information from the server the customer information capture pertaining to customers, and

via the reporting feature, wherein the user generates reports using the analysis of the inventory information and the customer information for managing the operation of the storage facility, including reports for revenue, unit availability, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information.

Hafen fails to teach, advise, or suggest at least the following claim elements as recited in claims 6-8, 21, 22, and 24, which variously depend from claim 2:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

a server ~~using an inventory information capture~~ having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein ~~the user inputs the inventory information into the room inventory database via the computer-terminal and an inventory information capture and the user room inventory database includes~~ accesses the inventory information

pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

~~the server using a customer information capture in communication with the inventory information capture, accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, and having wherein the user inputs the customer information into the server via the computer-terminal and a customer information capture and the user accesses the customer information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;~~

wherein one or both of the inventory information capture and customer information capture include information for managing the operation of the plurality of self-storage facilities, including information on revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information; and

the server having using a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server,

via the rental transaction feature, wherein the user rental transaction feature creates a rental agreement using the inventory information from the inventory information capture and the customer information capture, and wherein the rental agreement involves a plurality of self-storage units.

Hafen fails to teach, advise, or suggest at least the following claim elements as recited in claim 30:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

~~a server using an inventory information capture having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the user inputs the inventory information into the room inventory database via the computer-terminal and an inventory information capture and the user room inventory database includes accesses the inventory information pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;~~

~~the server using a customer information capture in communication with the inventory information capture, accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, and having wherein the user inputs the customer information into the server via the computer-terminal and a customer information capture and the user accesses the customer information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;~~

the server having using a rental transaction feature in communication with

the inventory information capture and customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server ,

via the rental transaction feature, and configured to create the user creates a rental agreement using the inventory information from the inventory information capture and the customer information capture, wherein the rental agreement involves a plurality of self-storage units, and

the server having using a reporting feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server,

via the reporting feature, wherein the user reporting feature extracts and analyzes the inventory information from the room inventory database pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network and extracts and analyzes the customer information from the server customer information capture pertaining to customers and generates reports using the analysis of the inventory information and the customer information for managing the operation of the storage facility, including reports for revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information.

Hafen discloses a central processing center 116 in communication with a central database 312 which stores rental information for rental facilities 106. Each rental facility 106 is operated by a manager 402, who operates a web browser on a computer system 200 at rental facility 106.

First, the alleged "business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities" in Hafen is merely a computer network (WAN 102 or Internet 104), but not a "business network". The term "network of storage facilities" and "computer network" are distinguished in the subject patent application. See paragraphs [0008], [0107], and [0108] of the subject application. Hafen only has a computer network and thus fails to disclose a business network.

Second, if the Examiner further searches and finds one or more references using a business network, secondary considerations are highly relevant to why the claimed invention would not be obvious over such references. See M.P.E.P. § 2141 (Section III). There is a long-felt need of competing businesses to have access to their competitors' business operations (such as their business network of customers, customer information, pricing, policies, etc.). However, competitors are unwilling to share their business operations, which is the basis of their success. In this way, it is also contrary to accepted wisdom to allow competitors to have access to your business network, and indeed, businesses guard their business network from competitors.

Finally, there would be commercial success if a business could have access to its competitors' business network. These secondary considerations are highly relevant on the issue of why the claimed invention would not be obvious over references that may cite a business network without all the other features of the claimed invention.

Third, Hafen fails to disclose a "user" and a "customer" as recited in the claims. The "user" in Hafen is the customer of a rental facility. However, in the subject claims, the "user" is personnel of each self-storage facility and not a customer of the self-storage facility. The "customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network" are distinguishable from the "user/personnel of each self-storage facility", which Hafen fails to account for and thus fails to distinguish. Rather, Hafen only discloses the alleged "customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network" (allegedly the user or customer of the rental facilities 106). There is no distinction made in Hafen between "user/personnel of each self-storage facility" and "customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network" as recited in the claims.

Thus, Hafen fails to teach, advise, or suggest one or more missing claimed elements, so that claims 1 and claims 6-8, 21, 22, and 24 (which variously depend from claim 2) are patentable over Hafen.

Claims 2, 9, 10, 16, 17, 20, and 30

Claims 2, 9, 10, 16, 17, 20, and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Hafen (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0023453) in view of McCarty et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,946,660).

McCarty fails to teach, advise, or suggest at least the same elements above as in Hafen and also fails to disclose the claimed elements in claim 2 (and claims 9, 10, 16, and 20, which variously depend from claim 2) as follows:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

a server using an ~~inventory information capture~~ having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the user inputs the inventory information into the room inventory database via the computer-terminal and an inventory information capture and the user room inventory database includes accesses the inventory information pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server using a ~~customer information capture in communication with the inventory information capture~~, accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, and having wherein the user inputs the customer information into the server via the computer-terminal and a customer information capture and the user accesses the customer information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

wherein one or both of the inventory information capture and customer information capture include information for managing the operation of the plurality of self-storage facilities, including information on revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information; and

the server having using a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server,

via the rental transaction feature, wherein the user rental transaction feature creates a rental agreement using the inventory information from the inventory information capture and the customer information capture, and wherein the rental agreement involves a plurality of self-storage units.

McCarty fails to teach, advise, or suggest at least the same elements above as in Hafen and also fails to disclose the claimed elements in claim 30 as follows:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

a server using an ~~inventory information capture~~ having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the user inputs the inventory information into the room inventory database via the computer-terminal and an inventory information capture and the user room inventory database includes accesses the inventory information pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server using a ~~customer information capture in communication with the inventory information capture~~, accessible to the user via the computer-terminal

coupled to the server, and having wherein the user inputs the customer information into the server via the computer-terminal and a customer information capture and the user accesses the customer information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server having using a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server,

via the rental transaction feature, and configured to create the user creates a rental agreement using the inventory information from the inventory information capture and the customer information capture, wherein the rental agreement involves a plurality of self-storage units, and

the server having using a reporting feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server,

via the reporting feature, wherein the user reporting feature extracts and analyzes the inventory information from the room inventory database pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network and extracts and analyzes the customer information from the server customer information capture pertaining to customers and generates reports using the analysis of the inventory information and the customer information for managing the operation of the storage facility, including reports for revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information.

First, while McCarty uses a computer network to allow storage facilities to communicate with a command center 12 via a kiosk 22, McCarty fails to teach, advise, or suggest a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities. The term "business network" is distinguishable from the term "computer network" in the subject application. See paragraphs [0008], [0107], and [0108] of the subject application. McCarty only discloses a computer network, but not a business network.

Moreover, if the Examiner further searches and finds one or more references using a business network, secondary considerations are highly relevant to why the claimed invention would not be obvious over such references. See M.P.E.P. § 2141 (Section III). There is a long-felt need of competing businesses to have access to their competitors' business operations (such as their business network of customers, customer information, pricing, policies, etc.). However, competitors are unwilling to share their business operations, which is the basis of their success. In this way, it is also contrary to accepted wisdom to allow competitors to have access to your

business network, and indeed, businesses guard their business network from competitors. Finally, there would be commercial success if a business could have access to its competitors' business network. These secondary considerations are highly relevant on the issue of why the claimed invention would not be obvious over references that may cite a business network without all the other features of the claimed invention.

Second, McCarty allows a customer to use kiosk 22 to communicate with command center 12 via a computer network in order to do rental transactions. However, the business network of claims 2 and 30 allows personnel of each self-storage facility to use the business network to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility (in addition to doing rental transactions). McCarty fails to disclose generating reports for and managing the operation of each self-storage facility.

Third, even though McCarty uses a "management utility program", it is not for managing the operation of each self-storage facility, but rather for changing the rental information for each storage unit. Moreover, McCarty fails to use information pertaining to the plurality of self-storage facilities of a business network and a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network.

Fourth, McCarty fails to teach, advise, or suggest a reporting feature that extracts and analyzes information pertaining to the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network and generates reports for managing the operation of the storage facility (including reports for revenue, unit availability, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information).

Thus, Hafen in view of McCarty fails to teach, advise, or suggest one or more missing claimed elements, so that claims claim 2 (and claims 9, 10, 16, and 20, which variously depend from claim 2) and 30 are patentable over Hafen in view of McCarty.

Claim 11

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Hafen in view of McCarty as applied to claim 2 and further in view of Vasquez (Article entitled "Housing Crunch...Leave Area").

For the same reasons as discussed above in connection with claim 2 (from which claim 11 depends), claim 11 is patentable over McCarty in view of Vasquez.

Claim 12

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Hafen in view of McCarty and Vasquez as applied to claim 11 and further in view of Official Notice of Inomata (U.S. Patent No. 6,999,825).

For the same reasons as discussed above in connection with claim 2 (from which claim 12 depends), claim 12 is patentable over McCarty and Vasquez in view of Official Notice of Inomata.

Claim 13

Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Hafen in view of Taylor (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0010601).

For the same reasons as discussed above in connection with claim 1 (from which claim 13 depends), claim 13 is patentable over Hafen in view of Taylor.

Claims 14 and 18

Claims 14 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hafen in view of Gale (U.S. Pub. No. 2001/0025250).

For the same reasons as discussed above in connection with claim 1 (from which claims 14 and 18 depend), claims 14 and 18 are patentable over Hafen in view of Gale.

Claim 15

Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Hafen in view of Gross (U.S. Patent No. 6,721,716).

For the same reasons as discussed above in connection with claim 1 (from which claim 15 depends), claim 15 is patentable over Hafen in view of Gross.

Claim 19

Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hafen in view of Brady (U.S. Pub. No. 2004/0088318).

For the same reasons as discussed above in connection with claim 1 (from which claim 19 depends), claim 19 is patentable over Hafen in view of Brady.

Claim 23

Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hafen as applied to claim 22 and further in view of Official Notice.

For the same reasons as discussed above in connection with claim 2 (from which claim 23 depends), claim 23 is patentable over Hafen in view of Official Notice.

Claim 25

Claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hafen as applied to claim 22 and further in view of Petkovsek (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0111923).

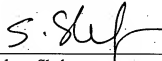
For the same reasons as discussed above in connection with claim 2 (from which claim 25 depends), claim 25 is patentable over Hafen in view of Petkovsek.

Conclusion

Thus, the Applicant respectfully submits that the subject application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is thus requested. Applicant invites the Office to telephone the undersigned attorney if he or she has any questions whatsoever regarding this Response or the subject application in general. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees to maintain this application or to deposit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 503289.

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Respectfully submitted,



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